

**ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

R A B I E S

RABIES PREVENTION PROGRAM

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS ANIMAL BITE REPORTS/QUESTIONS

Erie County – North
Tonawanda District Office
874-1070

Erie County – South
Hamburg District Office
649-4225

Administrative Office
858-6089

Erie County –Central
Lancaster District Office
683-6487

Erie County - City
Buffalo District Office
881-4052

Evenings/Weekends
Emergencies
M.E.R.S. Control
898-4225

DOG WARDEN/ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

Contact your Town Clerk or Police Dept. for the name of the Animal Control Officer serving your town.

NUISANCE WILDLIFE CONTROL

A list of licensed private wildlife trappers and pest control operators is available from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation at 851-7000.

PET VACCINATION

- All dogs and cats are required by NYS Public Health Law to be vaccinated for rabies.
- A pet must be proven to be currently vaccinated, or it will be regarded by the Erie County Health Department to be unvaccinated. Your vaccination certificate is the method of proof.
- Regardless of age, your pet's first vaccination is valid for one (1) year. All subsequent vaccinations are valid for three (3) years.

RABIES PREVENTION POLICY

1. The purpose of the Health Department Rabies Prevention Program is to prevent any human deaths due to rabies. Rabies is fatal to humans if post-exposure vaccination shots are not administered or are administered too late. Post-exposure treatment consists of a series of 5 vaccinations (plus RIG on the first day) given in a large muscle, such as the arm, over a 28-day period.
2. All warm-blooded animal bites are considered possible exposure to the rabies virus. For this reason it has been mandated by New York State Public Health Law that every animal bite be reported to the local Health Department.
3. Bites, scratches, contact of open wounds, sores, rashes or mucous membrane (i.e. eyes, nostrils, mouth or genitals) to saliva or nerve tissue of a suspected rabid animal is considered an exposure and should be reported. In addition, **bats in proximity to an unattended young child, sleeping individual, sensory or mentally impaired person may be considered a contact and should be reported.**
4. Any animal bite should be thoroughly cleansed with soap and water, as soon as possible, and medical attention should be sought immediately.
5. The Commissioner of Health is recommending rabies post-exposure shots for anyone bitten by certain animals which are not identified or captured. Report **ALL** animal bites to the Health Department.
6. The biting animal **MUST** be identified if it is an owned pet, or captured if it is a stray cat, dog or wild animal.
7. A bite by an uncaptured wild animal may need immediate evaluation. Call the emergency number evenings and weekends if necessary.
8. A biting dog, cat, ferret or domestic farm animal can be confined for observation for ten (10) days. If no symptoms develop, there is no danger of rabies exposure for the person bitten.
9. A biting stray cat, dog or wild animal, if captured, will be submitted to the New York State Rabies Laboratory and tested for the virus. Bites from exotic animals will be evaluated by the Health Department on a case-by-case basis (i.e. monkeys).
10. If a cat or dog fights with a known or suspected rabid animal, the rabies virus in the animal's saliva may remain alive on the pet's skin for up to two (2) hours and up to fifteen (15) minutes in its mouth. If it is necessary to handle the pet during this period, wear gloves. Wash the pet with soap and water. Call the Erie County Health Department (ECHD) to report the incident.
11. Animals which are frequently confirmed to be rabid in New York State, and should always be assumed to be rabid, are: raccoons, bats, foxes and skunks.
12. Animals which are occasionally found to be rabid in New York State include dogs, cats, horses, cows, sheep, deer, woodchucks, opossums, coyotes, and otter.
13. If any wild animal behaves in a strange manner such as; excessively aggressive, displays paralysis of the hind quarters of the body, has a slack or drooping jaw, acts tame, has no fear of humans, is disoriented, or wandering aimlessly;
 - Leave it alone!! Unless there is a bite involved, no agency is responsible for wild animal but, if there is a real threat to public safety, you can call

your animal control officer, local police or the DEC to capture or kill the animal.

- If you choose to destroy the animal yourself, use a method that will not damage the head or expose you to saliva or nervous tissue. **DO NOT TOUCH** the animal at any time without using rubber gloves or a plastic bag.

14. If an animal is found dead on your property and you have no reason to believe that a person or pet has been in contact with its saliva or nerve tissue, recommended disposal is burial under 36" of soil.

15. Rabies vaccination for dogs and cats is mandatory in Erie County.

16. Vaccination is not an absolute guarantee of protection from rabies for your pet. Any vaccinated pet which encounters a known or suspected rabid animal must receive a booster shot within five (5) days.

17. Any unvaccinated pet which is exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal must be either: sacrificed and properly disposed of, or confined in a manner acceptable to the Health Department for six (6) months, at the expense of the owner.

18. Should your animal develop any rabies-like symptoms (see #13), isolate it and contact the Health Department.

19. Any person who is at risk for exposure to rabies by frequent contact with warm-blooded animal saliva or bodily fluids may want to consider rabies pre-exposure shots as a precaution. For information, contact this Department at 858-6150.

**ERIE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
RABIES PREVENTION PROGRAM**
95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY 14202 (716) 858-6089

JOEL A GIAMBRA
County Executive

ANTHONY J. BILLITTIER, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

Erie County does not discriminate on account of Age, Sex, Race, Religion, Handicap, National Origin, Color, Sexual Orientation, Marital Status or Sponsor.